

## Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 AID-05 IGA-02 SSO-00 OC-06 CCO-00

L-03 INRE-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 /036 W

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O 181506Z NOV 76

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1724

INFO DOD IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 11784

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, ET

SUBJECT: CONTINUED GROUNDING OF MAAG AIRCRAFT

REF: ADDIS ABABA 10615

1. GROUNDING OF LIGHT AIRCRAFT INCLUDING MAAG AND USAID PLANES WHICH BEGAN SHORTLY AFTER CURRENCY EXCHANGE WAS ANNOUNCED IN SEPTEMBER (REFTEL) STILL CONTINUES DESPITE RELAXATION OF POUCH AND OTHER RESTRICTIONS FOR MAJORITY OF COUNTRIES. AS DEPT AWARE, CURRENCY EXCHANGE WILL NOT BE COMPLETED UNTIL JANUARY 12.

2. WE HAVE NOT TO THIS POINT FORMALLY PROTESTED GROUNDING OF MAAG AIRCRAFT ALTHOUGH GROUNDING IS CONTRARY TO PROVISIONS OF 1953 AGREEMENT. I HAVE TWICE, HOWEVER, RAISED MATTER ORALLY IN MOFA, AND CHMAAG HAS ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS RAISED IT WITH MOND, ALL THUS FAR WITHOUT SUCCESS. I THEREFORE BELIEVE TIME HAS COME TO TRY AND GET MESSAGE HOME TO THEM MORE FORCIBLY.

3. CHMAAG HAS PROPOSED THROUGH HIS OWN CHANNELS TO WRITE LETTER TO MOND INFORMING HIM THAT IN VIEW OF EPMG'S CONTINUED REFUSAL TO PERMIT AIRCRAFT TO FLY, HE DOES NOT WISH ALLOW HIS PERSONNEL TRAVEL FURTHER THAN 150 KMS FROM ADDIS ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS SINCE HE HAS NO  
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WAY OF RETURNING THEM TO ADDIS IN A HURRY SHOULD THIS

BECOME NECESSARY (CASE IN POINT OCCURRED SEVERAL DAYS AGO INVOLVING MESSAGE TO WIFE IN ADDIS WHOSE HUSBAND WAS ON TDY IN HARAR, INFORMING HER OF MOTHER'S CRITICAL ILLNESS WHICH NECESSITATED WIFE'S RETURN TO U.S. DESPITE SPECIAL PLEAS TO MOND AND MOFA BY CHMAAG AND MYSELF FOR PERMISSION PICK UP HUSBAND BY MAAG AIRCRAFT AND RETURN HIM TO ADDIS, UNKNOWN EPMG ARMY OFFICER SPEAKING FOR DIRG REFUSED MAKE EXCEPTION). LETTER WOULD HAVE IMMEDIATE IMPACT SINCE WESTINGHOUSE TEAM IS SCHEDULED PROCEED TO JIJGA IN CONNECTION WITH DEPLOYMENT OF TPS43D RADAR O/A DEC 15. IN CIRCUMSTANCES, MAAG HAS NO WAY TO SUPPORT THEM EXCEPT VIA UNSATISFACTORY ONE-WAY TEN-HOUR ROAD TRIP, YET MAAG IS CONTRACTUALLY RESPONSIBLE TO WESTINGHOUSE FOR EMERGENCY EVACUATION EXCEPT IN CASES OF MILITARY AND POLITICAL DISTURBANCE WHEN EVACUATION BECOMES RESPONSIBILITY OF ETHIOPIAN AIR FORCE. MAAG THEREFORE DOES NOT WISH PERMIT TEAM TO PROCEED TO JIJGA UNLESS AIRCRAFT CAN FLY.

4. WHILE I REGRET THAT WE HAVE REACHED THIS POINT, I BELIEVE WE HAVE BEEN PATIENT WITH ETHIOPIANS LONG ENOUGH ON THIS MATTER, AND THAT TIME HAS ARRIVED WHEN WE NEED TO SPELL OUT "CONSEQUENCES" MENTIONED PARA 3 STATE 234280 OF RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED UPON OUR OPERATIONS BY EPMG ACTIONS IN CONNECTION WITH CURRENCY REFORM, IN THIS CASE, CONSEQUENCES OF OUR INABILITY MAKE USE OF MAAG AIRCRAFT. I AM MOTIVATED IN PART BY CONCERN THAT GROUNDING OF AIRCRAFT HAS LEFT US WITH NO DIRECT AND RELIABLE AIR LIAISON WITH ASMARA. ACCORDINGLY, UNLESS DEPT OBJECTS, I PROPOSE TO AGREE TO CHMAAG LETTER TO MOND INFORMING HIM OF WESTINGHOUSE SITUATION AND OF A SELF-IMPOSED OFFICIAL TRAVEL LIMITATION. I ALSO PROPOSE A DIPLOMATIC NOTE THAT WOULD:

- A. CALL ATTENTION TO CONTINUED GROUNDING OF MAAG AIRCRAFT,
- B. REMIND EPMG THAT PURPOSE OF AIRCRAFT IN ETHIOPIA, IS TO ASSIST MAAG IN CARRYING OUT ITS FUNCTIONS IN SUPPORT OF EPMG MILITARY,
- C. NOTE AGAIN THAT GROUNDING IS INHIBITING MAAG FROM PERFORMING ITS ASSIGNED FUNCTIONS AND MAKE REFERENCE TO WESTINGHOUSE CASE,

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- D. STATE THAT WE CAN UNDERSTAND REASONS THAT LED TO GROUNDING ACTION, BUT THAT EPMG'S CONCERN HAS NO RELEVANCY TO IN-COUNTRY FLIGHTS BY MAAG AIRCRAFT ON OFFICIAL BUSINESS FOR BOTH GOVERNMENTS,
- E. REMIND EPMG OF PROVISIONS OF 1953 AGREEMENT,
- F. SAY THAT IF EPMG WISHES, WE WOULD BE WILLING TAKE ALONG SECURITY GUARD ON EACH FLIGHT UNTIL CURRENCY EXCHANGE IS OVER (AT EPMG'S RISK).

5. I CANNOT IN HONESTY SAY THAT EPMG IS LIKELY TO RESPOND POSITIVELY. HISTORY OF THEIR ACTION WITH REGARD POUCHES AND LIGHT AIRCRAFT THROUGHOUT CURRENCY EXCHANGE PERIOD IS NOT ENCOURAGING. DIRG HAS MADE PLAIN ITS OBSESSION THAT OPPOSITION ELEMENTS WILL USE ANY MEANS THEY CAN TO CONVERT CURRENCY HELD OUTSIDE OF COUNTRY, AND THAT OTHER CONSIDERATIONS ARE SECONDARY. NONETHELESS, IT IS CLEAR THAT ORAL DEMARCHES ARE NOT WORKING, AND THAT WE SHOULD TRY SOMETHING STRONGER IF MAAG AIRCRAFT ARE TO FLY AGAIN BEFORE JAN 12. I WOULD THEREFORE APPRECIATE DEPT'S COMMENTS BY NOV 22, IF POSSIBLE, WHEN NEXT MAAG-SUPPORTED EXPERT (NOT WESTINGHOUSE) IS SCHEDULED FOR TRIP TO HARAR/JIJIGA AREA.

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## Message Attributes

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